

Mr. Heming, Offord.

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OCCASIONAL SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE

TWO HEMINGFORDS,

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SUNDAY 24th FEBRUARY, 1793;

BEING

THE FOLLOWING ONE, AFTER THE MILITIA OF
OUR COUNTY MARCHED FORTH WITH ALACRITY,
TO MEET THE ENEMY IN THE GATE.

B Y

C. DICKENS, L.L.D.

DEDICATED IN HUMILITY TO HIS DIOCESAN,

AT BUCKDEN PALACE:

AND MAY BE HAD OF THE PREACHER, GRATIS.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

He that hath no Sword, let him sell his Garment and buy One!

HUNTINGDON;

PRINTED BY JENKINSON;

Price One Shilling, or Four Shillings per Dozen.

Handwritten scribbles at the top of the page.

AN OCCASIONAL SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

CHURCH OF ST. MARTIN



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OCCASIONAL SERMON.

2d Book of Chronicles, 15th Chap. 1st & 2d Verses;

"The Spirit of God, came upon Azariah, the Son of Oded."

"And he went out to meet Afa, and all Judah, and Benjamin;

"and he said, unto Him—the Lord is with You, while ye

"be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of

"you; but if ye forsake Him—He will forsake you."

THE History of the prophet Azariah, the Son of Oded, who went out it is said, to meet King Afa—neither that, of Afa himself, shall I at present have Time, should I enter upon them, to go through with; and it will be far more useful to you, (my Hearers,) at your own Homes, severally to search this particular portion of holy Scripture, yourselves; when, I shall commend you, as St. Paul formerly did the Bereans, who received the word of GOD with all readiness of Mind; but searched daily the Scriptures, that He had been preaching unto Them; whether those Things were so;—Wherefore, go ye (my Brethren) and do
A likewise;

likewise; For they will be able thro' CHRIST, to make you all wise unto Salvation : (as when our Host goeth forth against the Enemy—if ye keep yourselves, from every wicked Thing:)

This is my Opinion; This is my Faith, and Hope — whilst what is a man profited, or what shall we be profited, if we should gain the whole World, and lose our own Souls? Or what shall we give in Exchange for our Souls?

The prophet Azariah (ye hear,) told Afa, and all Judah, and Benjamin — that, the LORD was with them, while they were with Him; that, if they sought Him, He would be found of them; but, if they forsook Him — He would forsake them.

Verily, verily then, the Case is the very same with Us Christians; for GOD is the same yesterday, to Day, and for ever: And, if we seek the LORD early — (yea, if we seek Him late, even at the eleventh Hour, with Sincerity and Truth —) He will be found of Us: But if we purposely put it off from Day to Day — from Week to Week — from Month to Month — from Year to Year (as some do,) who forsake the established Church — how do we say that, we are wise — and, that the Law of the LORD, is with Us?

So

So that, this Expostulation of the prophet Jeremy, to the impenitent and hardened Jews — will be well worth our most serious Consideration frequently, at all Times, and upon all Occasions — inasmuch, as we are All liable to the very same Reproof ourselves, if we obey not in all Things ; if we make not a proper, a right Use of those means afforded us — and which God hath left us, for the furtherance of our Salvation : — otherwise, the LORD will not be with us, will not be found of us — but will forsake us, utterly — should we at any time, apostatize from Him — to go a whoring after our own Inventions !

It will be convenient moreover, (I must believe,) whilst I am thus employed — whilst I am thus most seriously and (I hope,) usefully engaged to beseech you to be reconciled — to fear God, and keep his Commandments — to observe, as I go along — the condition of all Christians, both with regard to the Instruction and Exhortation given them, in the writings of the Old and New Testament — with what Judgment ought to be made of their, and our Conduct and Behaviour under these good and wholesome Advantages : — For God, hath not left us — nor were our Forefathers left to unassisted Reason.

Reason only, to work out their Salvation; but from the very Beginning — GOD gave a Law to Adam, to the Israelites, and to their Children after them; sending (as we read) his prophets among them: — but when the fulness of Time was come — He graciously sent forth His Son, His only begotten One, into the World — to call Sinners, to Repentance; to open Men's Eyes — to turn them from Darknefs, to Light; and from the power of Satan, unto GOD.

To us therefore, (my Fellow Soldiers of this, our Communion —) to us, Children of Grace here, of this Household of Faith — hath GOD verily given (we all know,) his most dearly beloved Son — to redeem us, to purify us, to save us; not only to die for us, and to rise again for our Justification — but to be our Guide also, and Instructor — to bring us to Happiness, and lead us to Salvation — (of whose Body, of whose Flesh, and of whose Bones, we are Members — as of one another, in particular —)

When, whatever either He himself, or his Apostles, his Evangelists, or Others, guided by the holy Spirit of GOD — have taught us, as necessary to this glorious privilege of becoming

becoming the Sons of God, and joint Heirs with CHRIST, of the Kingdom of Heaven, is all faithfully preserved — And committed to writing, for us to look into — to read, examine, and meditate upon; to be an Encouragement and Warning to us, to the End of the World — or to our Lives' End at least — so long as our Moon endureth — who shall every One of us, in the Last Day, appear before CHRIST's Tribunal — to receive for the Things done in the Body, whether they be good, or bad: When, the Wicked shall go into everlasting Punishment; but the Righteous, into Life eternal.

But forasmuch, as there are (and may we not daily observe it in most Parishes) Some, who very seldom read their Bibles — Or who have not (the more the pity) any good capacity of judging what, they do read — yet God, (we are told) for their sakes, to help their Ignorance, their want of Capacity herein — hath moreover graciously appointed Pastors and Teachers in the Church, whose business, whose only business it is, to expound and inculcate the holy Scriptures in the ears of their People — proving to them that, they were

given by Inspiration of God; that, they are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness — that the Man of God, may be perfect — thoroughly furnished to all Good Works!

And that, there may be sufficient Time for all Christians to hear, and learn their Duty to God, to their Neighbours, and themselves — *one Day in seven*, is in all Places set apart, for religious Worship; which Day, is a Day of Rest from all worldly Labour — when, whoever wittingly, and willingly neglects to hear the Word of God, in Public, in the Congregation of CHRIST'S Flock — or to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it in private at Home, in their Closets, or with their Families — are utterly inexcusable; and shall in the End meet with their Reward — to be turned into Hell, with all the People that forget God: since, what can be a greater Aggravation of Men's Guilt, a greater Affront to the LORD, to call themselves Christians — to know what Duty and Service they owe to God — and yet, not do it — not practise it — not perform it at least twice, every Lord's Day.

Many I fear, there are (and I am sorry for it) who thus
obstinately

obstinately do despite to the Law of God — who, if they remember the Sabbath-Day — will not be wrought upon, by all that we can say — to keep it so holy : but whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear — we should cry aloud, and spare not ; it being our chief business to take heed unto ourselves, and to all the Flock over which, the HOLY GHOST hath made us Overseers, to feed the Church of God :— And verily, such are all the gracious Means given, and afforded us by God, in the Scriptures, for our Improvement and Growth in Grace — that, unless Ye are blind to your own Good — unless Ye will shut your Eyes, nor will hear with your Ears to be converted, to be persuaded — I know not, how any among you of this Household of Faith, should perish, (where the LORD is, to hear our Prayers, and receive our Petitions—) but that All, should be saved :—

For, as in the Case of Knowledge, and Instruction — so likewise, in the matter of Persuasion and Exhortation — we are not left to Conscience only, to our own Feelings ; but the very same Revelation, which teaches us our exact Duty to God, to our Neighbours, and ourselves — is accompanied
also,

also, with the most earnest Exhortations (we must believe,) to fulfil the same; all which are grounded upon the most important, affecting Reasons, that can be offered, or proposed to a free and rational Creature: —

When, what can be a greater Encouragement to do Good, than an Assurance of Happiness and Felicity in Heaven, to all those, who shall faithfully have searched (as the Bareans) the holy Scriptures, and complied with their Commands? or what greater, or more cogent Arguments are therein, to deter us (of every Denomination,) from Evil — than those, ye must have heard of from your Teachers, occasionally — if not seen many Times, with your own Eyes?

As when the Old World, would not be reclaimed by the preaching of Noah — God brought down the Flood upon them, and almost totally destroyed all the ungodly: That, when by the Admonitions of righteous Lot, the Inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, would not be warned — He turned their Cities into Ashes, and overthrew them — making them an Example, to all future Ages: That, when the Israelites rebelled — He destroyed them, in the Wilderness; no less than

than three and twenty Thousand, being consumed in one Day !

But it is enough ! These verily, are sufficient Instances : — and every one of us surely, have sufficient Means afforded us, to be obedient — to seek the Lord, while he may be found of us : — Whilst, if Ye will not make a proper use of these Means — of these Advantages given you — nor consult the Scriptures, nor hearken to the Stewards of God's Mysteries — nor hear Moses, nor the other numerous Prophets sent to awe you, to affright you — neither will Ye be persuaded, though One rose from the Dead : —

And what less can be expected, than that God, however merciful, patient, and long-suffering — should yet put the same Question to you, as aforetime, to the Jews — saying, How do Ye say, we are wise : and the Law of the Lord is with Us ? Lo certainly, in vain made He it ; the Pen of the Scribes, is in vain : —

For Ye can never plead surely, that ye understand not your Duty ; or at least, that ye are not sufficiently advised of it, and exhorted to perform it ; since the very Poor among us, the very meanest of this, our established Christian Church —

have, every Week, the Gospel preached unto them, as well as others; — so that they, all of them, have it in their Power too, to know enough in general — to make them happier, as well as wiser in the way of Godliness: — but if such will not be persuaded — will not be reconciled, will not be converted from their evil Ways — but will be running here and there; yet let not us (my Brethren) let not us, who hope to be saved — who wish to die the Death of the Righteous, and to have our last End like his — ever give up our Hope, or forsake our Calling as Men and Christians; but in all Things, do our Duty to God, as obedient Children, in his holy Temple — who will never leave us, nor forsake us either here, or hereafter; since, as the good prophet Azariah formerly told King Aza, and all Judah, and Benjamin — that the Lord would be with them, while they were with Him; — so, will He be with us (my People) upon the like foregoing Condition; granting us, in this World, Knowledge of His Truth — and in the World to come, Life everlasting: — but if we forsake Him, He will forsake us; if the Rich and Poor do so among us — we shall be consumed, both we and our King; nor shall we ever be saved by our Militia, or other our Forces: No King can be
so

so faved by the Multitude of an Host; neither is any mighty Man delivered by much Strength: but the Eye of the LORD is upon them that fear Him; and, that put their Trust in His Mercy:

So that, in very few Words, let me just leave with you my Friends, my Countrymen, and Fellow Christians — this very necessary and salutary Caution; — to be steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the Work of the LORD; forasmuch, as Ye know, that your Labour is not in vain, in the Lord!

Give me Leave too, further, before we go hence — to speak freely to you of the Church, whereunto ye belong; a Church, not only in its Doctrine and Discipline — but in all Things else, exactly conformable to the Primitive, the Apostolic, and Catholic One, which was watered with the Blood of Martyrs; and so, has our's — which was pestered with Heretics, and Schismatics; and so, is our's — whose Doctrine is so pure, whose Discipline so exact, whose Worship so solemn, and all whose other Rules and Constitutions — so holy, perfect, and divine — that Mankind, (too generally debauched in their Principles and Practises —) will hardly endure it; — forsake it,
and

and apostatize from it, (too many) to *serve Tables* : — when, let all such do as *they please* ! Whilst, if Ye, my Friends, be but as Pious towards GOD, as Loyal to our King, as Sober in yourselves, as Faithful to your Friends, as Loving to your Enemies, as Charitable to the Poor, and as Just to All — (as our Church enjoins you —) it will be well for you ! Happy will be the People, that are in such a Case ; yea, Blessed are the People, and they only, who have the LORD for their GOD ; who will never leave them, nor forsake them :

So that finally, O my People ! let me exhort you (with Isaiah) to trust in the LORD for ever ; for in the LORD JEHOVAH, is everlasting Strength ; whose Eyes are in every Place, beholding the Evil and the Good : nor will He ever leave you, or forsake you, to become a Portion for the Carnivorous Foxes : —

And my Life, my eternal Life for it — Ye shall be happy for evermore !

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah !

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